WANDERAKTE
004 – WA/GUAM-004/WV · NOzN

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A Journal of Administrative Gothic
& Bricolage World-Building

The operation traces back to 1979, when its eight-year-old publisher sat on his father's lap in a cubicle of the Honeywell Welfare Information Network, hardwired to a Level 6 minicomputer the size of a deep freeze. By 1980, that same system, paired with a rented Xerox 914 (shipped with a fire extinguisher, just in case), was repurposed to blow up Portsmouth Herald alligator photographs into 11×14 punk art brut posters, distributed unauthorized around town. The operation did not go unnoticed. The publisher fled to Canada, later returning as an old lobsterman. His father has spent the past forty-seven years in hiding in a Vermont cabin.

Out of this came Doctor Zhai's Almanac, Being a Curious Vessel Containing Anything and Everything, which debuted

in 1984. The Almanac gave way to Fowl Feathered Review (2012–2026), published under the imprint Fowlpox Press. Its first 34 issues and chapbook catalog—including two under the Nathaniel S. Rounds pen name—remain archived at fowlpoxpress.yolasite.com.

In 2020, as the pandemic locked down the world, Fowlpox Press rebranded as Fire Agate Press and took a back road. For the duration of COVID-19, it published three color-coded serials, all registered with Library and Archives Canada and archived via AnyFlip. The flagship was La nécessaire déconstruction de l'éphémère (ISSN 2563-1713), a French/English quarterly that ran six issues, edited by Virgil Kay with Jack Ketch as poetry editor and Paris Pâté handling art and layout. Printed under the fictive imprint of Hen Island, Port Midjan, Atlantic Canada, it was "distributed" from the amphibious vehicle Oruktor Amphibolos.

Alongside it ran two unnumbered, ISSN-less one-offs: The Tidal Mouth Expositor (№ 537), edited by Theodorus Mávros with Paris Pâté on layout and artwork, and The Roundelay Warbler (№

587), edited by Welton Schauung, who framed the issue as a cyclopaedia project derailed by his sister Anne. Publishing then passed to The Spring-Wound Mammoth Pancake Coalition (successor to Fowlpox Press, and not to be confused with its now-defunct sister operation, the Spring-Wound Mammoth Waffle Coalition). The Coalition inherited a warehouse of unused index cards—pre-ruled, pre-stamped, pre-abandoned—from Mail Order Broth & Bratwurst LLC, a defunct supplier of gallon broth and bratwurst by the dozen. The cards, originally meant for order tracking, became the substrate of the archive. Every citation in this catalog is filed on Mail Order Broth & Bratwurst stock, the company name still legible on the reverse in small type, like a watermark refusing to fade.

Rule stamped on every card in the system:

IF IT EXISTS, FILE IT. IF IT DOESN’T EXIST, FILE THE NOTE SAYING SO.

The cards outlived their purpose.
The vessel outlived its names.

The archive outlived the pandemic.
OBJECTIVES

WANDERAKTE is devoted to Administrative Gothic and Bricolage World-Building.
We publish fiction, poetry, essays, visual art, invented scholarship, municipal folklore, impossible ethnographies, neighborhood cosmologies, documentary fantasies, archival recoveries, procedural myths, and literary artifacts assembled from the overlooked machinery of ordinary life.

We are drawn to stories that emerge from local history, civic infrastructure, institutional language, vernacular knowledge, found objects, forgotten manuals, field guides, maps that have failed at their one job, radio broadcasts, View-Masters, storefronts, zoning disputes, maintenance logs, discarded catalogs, public notices, and neighborhood traditions.

Our guiding assumption:
The archive is a neighborhood.
The neighborhood is a forest.
The forest, on the map we're currently using, is Guam.

THE STAFF (Sink-Custodians / Function-Bearers)

- Virgil Kay: Final Arbiter // Driver of Record.
- Silent Bill: Overseer of Tactical Non-Sequiturs // Navigator, Nominal.
- Unkie Bob: Assigned to Casual Entropy // Conductor, Unlicensed.
- The Unnamed Dishwasher: Kerntriebwerk (core engine). Prolonged observation is discouraged, particularly at highway speed.

Published at irregular intervals, from wherever Larry has last come to rest.
TREE STREETS CARD INDEX — Active Since Nobody Can Remember
WANDERAKTE — Panopticon Forward

FILE: TRANSPORT & OFFICE, CURRENT — FULL DESCRIPTION

VEHICLE:
Renault Estafette, manufactured before 1980 (Renault ended Estafette production that year, which is also what makes it clean to import — under the US 25-Year Rule, anything built before 2001 as of this filing is exempt from DOT/EPA compliance, and this one clears that by a wide margin).

FORM: Boxy, front-wheel-drive delivery van — the engine sits low under the floor rather than up front, so the whole body behind the driver is open box, no hood eating into the cargo space. Slab sides, flat panels, a face that's more utilitarian than charming until you look at what's been done to it.

FORMER LIFE:
Converted in Dakar into a car rapide — the modification Senegalese owners typically make to this exact model and its sibling, the Renault 1000 kg, adding bench seating along the sides, an intermediate cabin locals call "the salon," and open-air access on both sides for quick

boarding. Ran a Dakar city route for decades under that conversion.

CONDITION
AS RECEIVED: Unrestored on purpose. Body carries the visible record of its working life — repainted slogans under newer slogans, patch-welds where panels gave out, upholstery replaced piecemeal by whoever had upholstery that week. One interior trim panel still missing, left as a visible gap rather than improvised shut.

ACQUIRED:
Bought on the ground in Dakar by a friend of the editor's, then shipped by container to the United States. Order placed stateside by Virgil Kay, at a desk, mid-Club-Mate, 1980s Russian techno on, the transaction twice interrupted — once to photograph some cows encountered that afternoon with a circuit-bent Polaroid, once to finish the Club-Mate. Those Polaroids were later hand-worked, the pick end of a zinc nutcracker traced into the emulsion while it still gave.

PARTS
SOURCED AFTER ARRIVAL: Heater core from a retired postal worker
outside Lyon; wiper linkage from a collector near Utrecht, owed a photo
of the van running in return; trim panel unrecovered, filed as absence
rather than resolved.

CURRENT
FUNCTION: WANDERAKTE's transport and office, cargo box to be fitted
for the card index. Supersedes Larry (1961 GM 4106), formerly of the intercity coach lines. Whereabouts
unconfirmed, not currently treated as a problem.

Non ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco.
— Virgil

DAKAR, SENEGAL
NEAR PL. DE L'INDÉPENDANCE

RENAULT ESTAFETTE
1964

POLAROID SX-70
MAR 14, '92

a3 4595 0034704 7a

67038

910.5
N277

National Geographic
Jan-June 1946
v.89

OROUGH TOWN LIBRARY
rborough, N. H. 03458

Døss · MD

By GLH-9

[SYSTEM: FILE OPENED: MD / MEMORY DRIFT]

The b00k had a barcøde on it like a passport of its own:

PETERBOROUGH TOWN LIB

a3 4595 7a

catalog number 910.5 N277

National Geographic, Jan–June 1946, v.89

rebound February 1978 in a spine the cølor of an old bruise.

Somebody in Peterborough, New Hampshire had once been responsible for it. Had stamped it and shelved it and known, briefly, where it belonged. Eventually, decades later, somebody else had let it go — library sale, house cleanout,

moving-out, death, nobody left to ask.

[SYSTEM: OWNER NOT FOUND]

[SYSTEM: PRIOR WITNESSES: UNKNOWN]

It came to Doss the way most of his gear came to him: sideways, secondhand, already carrying a life he hadn’t been part of. He liked that part best. A thing that already had a history before you touched it owed you nothing and everything at once.

Inside, still folded into their original pockets, the insert maps had survived intact — a small miracle, since the whole reason bound volumes lost their maps was that some previous owner always cut them loose to hang one on a wall.

India and Burma, drawn in the Cartographic Section, Washington, copyright April 1946.

A second sheet, unlabeled at the fold but announcing itself in block capitals once opened:

KASHMIR, CHANG TANG, TIBET

The Buka Mangna Range sprawled across it like a held breath.

[SYSTEM: COORDINATES NOT RECOGNIZED]

[SYSTEM: OVERLAY: HISTORICAL BORDERS ACTIVE]

There was an article, too, deep in the issue — South of Khyber Pass — with a black-and-white photograph of a Peshawar coppersmith mending a china pot with a hammer.

“Tap, tap,” the caption said, “go the hammers.”

Doss had read that caption more times than anything he’d ever been assigned in an actual classroom.

[moorssalc lautca na ni]

The point was never that the maps were accurate.

They weren’t.

They weren’t innocent, either. They were full of names given by people who thought naming was the same as knowing, full of borders drawn with confident ink over places where confidence had no right to settle. Within a year of printing, they were wrong in ways nobody drawing them could have known yet, wrong in ways some people would spend the rest of their lives bleeding through.

[SYSTEM: BORDER MODEL OBSOLETE]

[SYSTEM: UPDATE FAILED]

But Doss was seventeen, and at seventeen he trusted broken instructions more than current ones, because at least broken instructions admitted, eventually, that they had broken.

The maps were a version of the world that no longer existed, and he had decided — with total unearned confidence and no useful caution — that following instructions from a world that no longer existed was at minimum as valid as following the ones from a world that currently did.

His passport he stamped himself, at borders and at the wrong places, wherever the map told him something was a border, whether or not anyone at that border agreed with him.

[SYSTEM: PASSPORT STATUS: SELF-AUTHORED]

[SYSTEM: AUTHENTICATION: MANUAL OVERRIDE]

Most of the time nobody was there to disagree.

The Chang Chenmo Range did not have customs agents.

[SYSTEM: AUTHENTICATION FAILURE: NO OFFICIAL DISAGREEMENT DETECTED]

He busked with all of it strapped or bungeed to a wire-frame cart he'd found already dead in an Antwerp alley and brought back to life with a coat hanger and a stubbornness: a circuit-bent Kawasaki keytar, its guts rewired so a wrong chord sometimes triggered a photocell that only worked in direct sun; a head mic feeding an MP3 beat he'd built at fourteen through three Danelectro pedals into a Marshall MS-4 Micro Stack the size of a lunchbox, turned up until it distorted in a way that sounded, if you squinted with your ears, almost intentional.

[SYSTEM: AUDIO INPUT: DISTORTION DETECTED]

[SYSTEM: CORRECTION: INTENTIONAL]

He wore the world-map shirt on days he wanted to be legible and the sun-and-moon shorts on days he didn't care, and either way the wooden bead bracelets clattered against the keytar's neck when he played, a percussion track nobody had asked for and everybody got anyway.

He recorded onto a Zoom H4essential — thirty-two bit float, structurally impossible for him to blow out a take no matter how badly he misjudged a plaza's acoustics, which was the only piece of professional restraint in his entire operation.

The rest of the operation ran on a Rek-O-Kut Imperial he'd found gutted in a shuttered radio-repair shop outside Ghent, its synchronous motor locked stubborn and literal to 60 Hz. He powered it from a scavenged 12-volt battery through a pure sine wave inverter he'd built from a kit after learning the

cheap modified-sine ones cooked windings and put a hum in the cut he could not live with.

The point was the cut.

Not the recording. Not only the recording.

The point was that somebody stood in front of him and watched their own five minutes become a physical object. Watched the needle take the sound out of the air and force it into a groove. Watched the mistake stay. Watched the performance stop being something that had happened and become something they could hold.

[SYSTEM: WITNESS REQUIRED]

[SYSTEM: WITNESS PRESENT]

[SYSTEM: TRANSACTION COMPLETE: ANALOG]

A person would stand there with their hands in their pockets, laughing or not laughing, and

walk away with an actual disc, still warm.

A circuit-bent Casio digicam sat on a tripod he'd zip-tied to the cart, glitching every performance into something with more color in it than the color that was actually there. At night, wherever there was a signal, he uploaded the good ones and let people find him or not.

[SYSTEM: VISUAL INPUT: CORRUPTED]

[SYSTEM: CORRECTION: ARTISTIC INTENT CONFIRMED]

Between sets he pulled out a phrasebook so pocket-sized it had clearly been designed to sit at an A&P checkout between the gum and the tabloids — German, French, Spanish, one page each, none of it enough — and asked whoever was still standing there where he should go next.

He wrote what they told him into a marble notebook the size of his palm, in a drawing pen from a Five Below that had cost him a dollar twenty-five, and the notebook filled faster than the actual distance he covered, because everyone had an opinion about the next town and none of their opinions agreed.

[SYSTEM: ROUTE REQUEST]

[SYSTEM: RESPONSES: MULTIPLE]

[SYSTEM: AGREEMENT: NONE]

He was chill about almost everything.

That was how people described it if they liked him.

If somebody he'd started to like well enough to sit with for a few days turned out to be using, or hurting themselves, or came at him sideways with their hands balled up, he didn't say anything about it. He didn't accuse. Didn't plead. Didn't

stage the scene where one person asked another person to be different and both of them had to stand there inside the asking.

He just, at some point after that, wasn’t there anymore.

No scene. No last conversation. No door-slam. No final message that could become evidence.

[SYSTEM: DEPARTURE WITHOUT TRANSACTION]

[SYSTEM: MEMORY: MARKED FOR PURGE]

The cart would be gone from wherever it had been parked, and that would be the whole explanation anybody got.

The turntable fried outside Ljubljana.

A borrowed inverter, somebody’s well-meaning modified-sine unit, and the motor windings went from warm to cooked in about four

minutes while Doss stood there smelling it happen and unable to do anything but pull the plug too late.

[SYSTEM: 60Hz LOCK LOST]

[SYSTEM: DAMAGE: IRREVERSIBLE]

He didn’t grieve it the way you’d grieve a person.

But something in the operation changed shape after that.

The discs had been the thing you handed to someone standing right in front of you. What replaced it — an app, a Shopify storefront that cut vinyl to order and mailed it out of a pressing plant he’d never see, synced somehow to Spotify so a stranger four thousand miles away could buy the same five minutes the person in the plaza had gotten for free — worked.

It worked fine.

It worked at a distance.

[SYSTEM: TRANSACTION MODE: DIGITAL]

[SYSTEM: WITNESS: REMOTE]

He uploaded the files instead of the disc now.

Nobody got to watch the needle cut anymore.

[SYSTEM: WITNESS NOT FOUND]

[SYSTEM: PROCESSING: AUTOMATED]

It was around then that he found the flights app, cheap fares sorted by nothing but price, and got it into his head that the maps weren’t really giving him a route so much as a name.

And once you had a name, you didn’t have to walk to it.

Cheapest flight, whatever showed up.

Backpack, nothing that didn’t fit in it.

Once it was New Mexico.

Once, because the Chang Tang sheet had been folded open on his knee for three days straight and he couldn’t stop looking at it, it was Tibet.

[SYSTEM: MAP IS NOT A ROUTE]

[SYSTEM: USER PROCEEDS: OVERRIDE CONFIRMED]

II

An old man in Bad Ischl told him about the mine, or told him enough of it, over a beer Doss hadn’t ordered and didn’t refuse.

Altaussee, the man said. Salt mines up in the hills. The place where the regime had put the paintings before the end — not hidden the way you hide a thing you’re ashamed of, hidden the way you hide a thing you still think you’ll come back for.

Altarpieces. Panels. Whole museums’ worth.

And orders, at the very end, to seal the doors with enough explosive that nobody would ever come back for any of it at all.

Orders that somebody — a miner, an engineer, a man with a name the old man kept circling and never landing on — had quietly disobeyed.

[SYSTEM: NAME NOT FOUND]

[SYSTEM: DECISION LOG: OVERRIDE DETECTED]

Doss wrote the one who said no in the marble notebook, because that was the part that stuck, more than the paintings.

Not the treasure.

Not the mountain.

The door.

[SYSTEM: KNOWN DECISION: ARCHIVED]

Somewhere in this whole soaked, over-mapped, redrawn continent there had been one specific person standing at one specific door with orders in one hand and a decision in the other, and the decision had gone the other way.

He didn’t know yet if the story was leading him toward the mine itself or just toward the shape of that decision, repeated wherever he could find it repeated.

[SYSTEM: QUERY: DESTINATION UNKNOWN]

[SYSTEM: SUGGESTION: FOLLOW DECISION PATTERNS]

He didn’t think it mattered yet which.

He didn’t have the Rek-O-Kut anymore to mark the occasion with, so he marked it the only way he had left.

He propped his phone against the beer glass, opened the glitch app, and went live — the Chang Tang sheet held up behind him like a backdrop, the app’s feed folding its topography translucent and swimming over his own face, over the bar, over the old man’s hands, borders that hadn’t existed in eighty years drifting across a room that very much did.

[SYSTEM: HISTORICAL BORDER / CURRENT ROOM]

[SYSTEM: OVERLAY ACTIVE: CONFLICT DETECTED]

He didn’t explain any of it to whoever was watching.

He just played four bars on the keytar, badly, on purpose, and let the stream run.

[SYSTEM: AUDIO INPUT: INTENTIONAL DISTORTION]

[SYSTEM: STREAM STATUS: LIVE]

Someone watching from three countries back — someone he’d left, the way he left things, without a scene, a few weeks after she’d started disappearing for stretches he didn’t ask about — sent a message that night for the first time since he’d gone.

[SYSTEM: REMOTE WITNESS DETECTED: PRIOR CONNECTION]

He read it standing outside the bar in the cold.

He didn’t answer it.

[SYSTEM: RESPONSE CHANNEL: NONE]

But he didn’t turn the stream off, either.

[SYSTEM: DISAPPEAR? NO]

[SYSTEM: REPLY? NO]

[SYSTEM: PRESENCE WITHOUT SPEECH: CONFIRMED]

Which was, for him, as close to an answer as he had.

The feed stayed open.

The map kept moving over his face.

Somewhere behind the glass, the old man lifted his beer and looked through Doss without knowing he was still being broadcast, one more witness caught in a machine that could not tell the difference between proof and memory.

[SYSTEM: FEED REMAINS OPEN]

[SYSTEM: QUERY: WHY DO YOU FOLLOW DEAD MAPS]

DIRECCION SEG.ESARO
-FRONTERS-
27. 9. 93 853
A ENTRADA
BARAJAS-MADRID

DIESEL
POWERSTEAMER
POWERFLUSH
4 CLEANING BOWL
DIRTLIFTER POWERFLUSH

THE SEAGULL, THE HAT, AND THE PARKING LOT

By Pumpkin Spice Pork Sausage

There are things which happen because they happen and things which happen because somebody has written down that they happened, and between these two categories—which ought, by every reasonable geometry, to remain separate—there exists the parking lot.

Not this parking lot, precisely, although yes, this parking lot, the one beneath the overpass where the sodium light has broken itself open over the blacktop and poured rust into the seams, where carts lie overturned in the median like the exhausted machinery of some defeated migration, where frost

is considering, with
bureaucratic patience, the
possibility of becoming itself.

The parking lot is working.

It is always working.

This is important.

We are idle.

This is our crime.

We had been sitting in the car
when Imogen lowered the window
by the width of a thought and
held out the tail-end of a
sleeve of crackers.

"Just one."

"It isn't one anymore."

"Kit. It's a crumb."

A crumb, I told her, is only one cracker after the apparatus has begun to disassemble it.

This sounded cleverer than it was.

The gull came down.

Before it came down, however, there had already been the filing.

There is always the filing.

Before we see a thing we have already begun assigning it a drawer. The Tree Streets know this. The loading bay knows this. The old names know this. MooseMart became MarketMesh and MarketMesh, before Corporate had properly finished pronouncing its own replacement, had become MarketMush in the mouths of people who had never once been consulted.

Somewhere the ø of FødderNow had been preserved.

Somewhere the Dakar sticker on the folding cart had been preserved.

Somewhere there remained a photograph of a car rapide shipped from Senegal, still shedding paint from the journey.

Somewhere, because somebody had thought to point a camera at it, there was an abandoned Bissell on a dark lawn, its RGB channels split apart down its body, burning red against the sickly yellow of the house behind it, the nozzle pointing nowhere, the cord lost in grass.

It looked like evidence.

It looked like evidence because it had been photographed.

And perhaps that is what evidence is: not the thing that happened, but the thing that survived somebody's decision to look.

"Just one," Imogen said.

She flicked the crumb onto the asphalt.

The gull descended.

It ate.

Three bays away DøSS was playing the keyboard, his speaker held together by two zip-ties and the force of stubbornness, the whole apparatus giving off the electronic afterlife of a machine that had been asked to remember a song it had never actually known.

He was not busking quarters.

Not anymore.

He was busking the act of accounting.

"Count the axle," he sang.

The note broke.

"Count the stripe."

The parking lot swallowed it.

"Count the bolt upon the gate."

A shopping cart struck a wheel-stop.

"Ah—brother, brother—"

And here the gull lifted its head.

"—who counts the vapor leaking beside the weight?"

We had not yet noticed the hat.

That was already too late.

It crossed the travel lane without haste.

Wide-brimmed.

Oiled canvas.

Wrong for late-autumn Maine.

Correct for Nettie.

She walked against the outbound tide of carts and SUVs with the strange obedience of someone following a regulation that had been rescinded without anyone remembering to tell her.

She saw the place where the gull had been.

She crouched.

She pinched up the crumbs.

Carefully.

Not like litter.

Like a document.

Like the corner of a document that had been misfiled and might, if unfolded, contain the explanation for something that had never been explained.

"No," Imogen said.

"I haven't said anything."

"You were going to."

"I wasn't."

"You were."

Nettie stood.

The crumbs rested in her gloved hand.

Now she had them.

This was the first inexplicable thing.

The second was that she walked to her car.

The third was that she opened the passenger door.

The fourth was that she placed the crumbs inside.

She closed the door with the utmost conscientiousness.

"Is she putting them in the trash?"

"No."

"Her car?"

"She put them in her car."

"Why?"

This question passed through the three of us simultaneously and emerged as nothing.

Only the rattle of a cart against a wheel-stop.

Only DøSS, three bays away, saying:

"An outlier is only an outlier 'til the file is opened for them."

Then:

"The evidence has been relocated.

The premises must be rendered consistent with the premise."

Nettie returned to her post.

Or perhaps she did not.

Perhaps it was we who returned to ours.

This is one of the difficulties.

The difficulty with watching is that eventually the watcher enters the watched scene and,

having entered it, becomes one more object requiring classification.

I began writing.

I had not meant to.

I wrote:

NETTIE

WIDE-BRIMMED HAT

CRUMBS PLACED IN CAR

NOTEBOOK

SECOND PARKING SPACE

Then:

PROPANE SMOKER.

I crossed that out.

I wrote:

PROPANE.

Crossed it out again.

There is always a second
incision.

The eye, traitor that it is,
circles back.

Past the rear of the building.

Past the painted bollards.

Past the chainlink.

Past the warnings faded by weather into something resembling decoration.

There was a man leaning against the propane cage.

Smoking.

Directly beside the pressurized cylinders.

Nobody noticed.

Or everybody noticed and filed it somewhere else.

This distinction is not as comforting as it first appears.

The man took a drag.

Exhaled.

The plume entered the ambient furniture of MarketMush.

Beside the cart return.

Beside the price-check speaker.

Beside the concrete.

Beside us.

"Ah," DøSS said.

His note died in his throat.

The reverb continued.

"There."

There was no music now.

"There it is."

Nettie did not look.
Nobody did.
"The propane," I said.

"Maybe she hasn't seen him."

"He's beside the propane."

"Maybe she has."

"She saw the crumb."

"It was closer."

"The propane is closer to him."

"That isn't how distance works."

"No," I said.

It isn't.

And this, absurdly, is where the old cities entered the parking lot.

Not geographically.

Not historically.

There were no ruins beneath the asphalt that we could see, no shattered ministries sleeping under the loading dock.

And yet something old was working the shift beside us.

It had followed the concrete north. It followed the arrows, the subdivision, the loading bay. It learned to say associate instead of worker. It learned SKU numbers. It learned fiscal-year renaming. It learned the little smile with which one explains that a thing is not prohibited, merely outside one's designated authority.

It was not a ghost. It was a filing system that had outlived every empire that ever built one, and it had found, in this parking lot, excellent working conditions.

It was in the hat.

It was in the crumb.

It was in the notebook.

It was in the cigarette.

"Do you think she was watching us?" Imogen asked.

"I think she looked towards us."

"That isn't the same thing."

"No."

She was quiet.

"Do you think I did something wrong?"

"No. Not in the slightest."

"Do you think feeding the seagull is illegal?"

"Not generally."

"Generally?"

"There may be local rules. Property rules. Wildlife rules. Littering rules. Rules about attracting birds."

"Rules about rules."

"Yes."

"I gave it a crumb."

"I know."

"I didn't summon a flock."

"I know."

"I didn't throw food at the propane."

"I know."

At precisely this moment the speaker above us announced, with inexplicable tenderness, a price reduction on patio furniture.

The announcement floated over the lot.

The lot accepted it.

This is what the lot does.

It accepts things.

It accepts tire wash and oil, frost and sodium, carts and cigarettes, crumbs and price reductions, names that have changed and names that never existed, the employee who wears the wrong hat, the customer who smokes beside the cylinders, the witness who notices the hat but not the flame, the witness who notices the flame but cannot establish jurisdiction, the witness who notices jurisdiction but cannot establish motive, the witness who writes everything down and therefore eventually becomes responsible for the existence of what he has written.

We tried to reclaim the sequence.

POLICY.

LITTER.

ATTRACTING GULLS.

WILDLIFE.

DOCUMENTATION OF VEHICLE.

LOITERING.

ROUTINE CHECK.

PRIVATE PROPERTY RULE.

LOCAL DIRECTIVE.

UNKNOWN.

Each explanation had the clean little face of plausibility.

None was sufficient.

A legal note appeared in my notebook in handwriting I do not recognize:

No general Maine criminal prohibition has been identified here against a person sitting in a parked car and giving a few cracker crumbs to a herring gull. Certain restrictions may arise from particular locations, property rules, wildlife provisions, litter regulations, or other local directives.

Below it:

IMOGEN BROKE NO LAW.

Below that:

NETTIE, AS OBSERVED, BROKE NONE.

Below that:

THE MAN BESIDE THE PROPANE CAGE: UNRESOLVED.

And beneath everything:

RULES ABOUT RULES.

The strange thing is that the note did not settle anything.

The note made everything worse.

Because now there was a record.

And once there is a record, the event acquires a second life, a

clerical afterlife, in which the original event may be innocent, meaningless, accidental, but the record—oh, the record—must continue, must be maintained, must be entered, re-entered, cross-referenced, indexed, circulated.

Keep in circulation.

If it exists, file it.

If it doesn't exist, file the note saying so.

I had written those words somewhere before.

Or they had written me.

DøSS was humming now.

A single wavering tone.

It trembled between a dirge and the sound a machine makes when it is trying, against all odds, to remember a lullaby.

"Crumbs are portable," he said.

The Casio clicked.

"Crumbs may be entered into a column."

The man beside the propane cage smoked.

"Vapor has no column."

And suddenly the Bissell returned.

Not because it belonged there.

Because it did.

The photograph appeared over the parking lot like a transparency badly registered in a cheap printing press.

The old carpet cleaner on the lawn.

Red-split.

Spectral.

The house behind it glowing yellow through the emulsion.

The nozzle pointing nowhere.

The cord disappearing into grass.

Nobody loading it into a truck.

Nobody saying:

There.

Nobody saying:

There it is.

It looked as though it were mid-journey to a place it had never reached.

It looked like the parking lot after everybody had gone home.

It looked like every parking lot after everybody had trained themselves to stop looking.

"File the cleaner," DøSS said.

"File the dry-cleaner ticket, filed for years before it knew why.

File the ø.

File the mush.

File the car rapide.

File the Mirage.

File Laughing Bear.

File the pressing.

File the crumbs."

His voice changed.

"When the tank goes, brother, will they pull the file on the cigarette?"

A pause.

"Or will they pull the file on the one who tried to note the crumb?"

The Law, he said, is mostly occupied with what fits in the box.

The rest is left to the weather.

I looked toward Lawn & Garden.

The brim of Nettie's hat was disappearing through the wire mesh.

"Maybe," Imogen said, "she picked up the crumbs because it was her job."

"Maybe."

"Maybe the job is simply to pick things up."

"Maybe."

"Maybe she put them in her car because there was nowhere else designated to put them."

"Maybe."

"Maybe the smoking customer is somebody else's job."

"Maybe."

I stared through the smoke toward the cylinders.

"That," I said, "is almost invariably how it works."

And there it was again, the old architecture of helplessness.

Not malice.

Not conspiracy.

Something more banal and therefore more durable.

The assignment of attention.

The distribution of responsibility.

The narrowing of the visible.

The miraculous administrative transformation by which the dangerous becomes ordinary because nobody's line of authority intersects with it, while the harmless becomes intolerable because it has

wandered directly into the field of somebody's designated responsibility.

The crumb has a column.

The vapor does not.

The hat can be described.

The smoke cannot.

The notebook can record the absence of a vest.

The notebook cannot record the exhaustion of the woman wearing the hat.

And perhaps she is tired.

Perhaps that is what she writes.

Not the crumbs.

Not the weather.

Not the vehicle.

Not the gull.

Perhaps simply:

I AM TIRED.

But even that is too large for
the form.

So she writes the weather.

She writes the crumbs.

She writes the second parking space.

She writes the angle of her neck.

She writes something down because writing something down is still, under certain circumstances, a way of refusing disappearance.

And this is where I begin to suspect that we have been unfair to Nettie.

Poor Nettie.

She may not have been trying to punish anybody.

She may have been trying to hold the place together.

The parking lot was sliding.

Not physically.

Or not only physically.

Everything slides.

Names slide.

Jobs slide.

Responsibility slides.

Memory slides.

One fiscal year slides into another and the old sign remains underneath the new sign like a ghost refusing to learn the corporate vocabulary of its successor.

Perhaps Nettie picked up the crumbs because they were the thing she could pick up.

Perhaps she put them in the car because there was nowhere else designated to put them.

Perhaps the cigarette belonged to somebody else's category.

Perhaps that is what categories are for.

Not to explain the world.

To determine which portions of the world we are permitted to notice.

I wrote:

THE HARMLESS OUTLIER RECEIVES EXTRAORDINARY ATTENTION WHILE THE GENUINELY HAZARDOUS OUTLIER BECOMES PART OF THE SCENERY.

I crossed it out.

I wrote it again.

I crossed it out harder.

The sentence remained.

The red Bissell remained.

The cigarette remained.

The crumb remained.

The hat remained.

The gull remained.

DøSS lifted his head.

"File the space where nothing happened," he sang.

His voice carried through the loading bay.

"File the hat.

File the gull.

File the thing we chose—

and the thing we could not choose to see."

We pulled out of the row.

Slowly.

There is always a strange ceremony to leaving a parking lot at night. You do not simply leave. You pass through the last few jurisdictions of illumination: sodium, fluorescent, darkness, the red glow of brake lights, the black glass of the road.

We passed the propane cage.

The man was still smoking.

The seagull had returned to the lamp post.

It looked down upon the blacktop with the offended expression of a creature which had discovered that justice and snacks were both temporary arrangements.

Imogen put her hand over mine on the shifter.

"I think," she said, "some people try to keep the whole world from becoming the Bissell."

I looked at her.

"By writing down the wrong thing very, very carefully."

She watched the road.

"For fear of what would happen if they ever started writing down the right one."

For several seconds neither of us spoke.

Then, through the rearview mirror, I saw Nettie.

Or thought I saw her.

Notebook open.

Hat still on.

Writing.

Perhaps:

I AM TIRED.

Perhaps:

WEATHER.

Perhaps:

CRUMBS.

Perhaps the precise coordinates of the second parking space.

Perhaps she was writing down a crumb in an attempt to prove, if only to herself, that she was

still capable of noticing at all.

And perhaps this is why we file.

Not because the world is orderly.

Because it isn't.

Not because the file contains the truth.

Because it cannot.

We file because otherwise the things disappear completely, and disappearance, once it becomes habitual, begins to resemble consent.

Somewhere a page turns.

Somewhere in Lawn & Garden a woman in a wrong hat closes a notebook.

Somewhere a cigarette burns beside a cage of pressurized propane.

Somewhere a gull searches the blacktop for what has been removed.

Somewhere an abandoned Bissell glows red in an old photograph, the nozzle pointing nowhere.

Somewhere a Mitsubishi Mirage remembers, in upholstery and dust, a song.

Somewhere the ø survives, and
the old city goes on quietly
beneath the forms in triplicate.

Somewhere somebody is writing:

Pick them up.

Carry them to the car.

Return.

Write something down.

Drive to another row.

Turn around.

Look again.

Write something else down.

Return to post.

And beneath the sequence,
because there must always be
something beneath the sequence:

A lit cigarette beside a cage of
pressurized propane.

Nothing.

Nothing.

Nothing.

And then:

There.

There it is.

The last sound we heard from DøSS was no longer sung.

It came loose from the longest tail of his reverb, pitched somewhere between the loading bay and a place much older than loading bays:

"File it.

File the note saying so.

File it again.

Keep it in circulation."

The parking lot continued without us.

This is also important.

It does not wait for interpretation.

It does not care whether the crumb was legal.

It does not care whether Nettie was watching.

It does not care whether the man beside the propane cage was anybody's responsibility.

It continues.

The lamps continue.

The cylinders continue.

The carts continue.

The gull continues.

The cigarette continues.

The weather continues.

The file continues.

And somewhere, in the darkness after the car has gone, the distinction between what happened and what was recorded becomes so thin that the two begin to occupy the same page.

The page turns.

Another card is pulled from the stack.

It is cut apart.

Pieces are redistributed.

A sentence from the ending appears near the beginning.

A crumb appears where the cigarette ought to be.

The hat crosses the travel lane again.

The Bissell waits on the lawn.

The gull descends.

The notebook opens.

The man lights another cigarette.

And the machinery of noticing, having once begun, cannot quite bring itself to stop.

IF IT EXISTS, FILE IT.

IF IT DOESN'T EXIST, FILE THE NOTE SAYING SO.

KEEP IN CIRCULATION.

CARD #03-LOT.

ENTERED.

RE-ENTERED.

WILL BE RE-ENTERED AGAIN.

CLASSIFICATION:

AMBIENT DISPROPORTION.

STATUS:
UNRESOLVED.

ACTION:

KEEP IN CIRCULATION.

CONTAINS BIOENGINEERED FOOD INGREDIENTS. THE INGREDIENTS FROM CORN AND SOY IN THIS PRODUCT COME FROM GENETICALLY MODIFIED CROPS.

Brain Cell of the Walking Beam

— attributed to Gocco Sheitelmacher

call it 1244

and the ship is tired
of water, so they turn it
upside down

and it becomes

a sky.

nineteen planks still
remembering the order

they kept

when they were a hull,
caulk gone hard as opinion

in the seams.

a swallowtail patch cut
by someone whose name
nobody kept. No twin

of it found anywhere else
on the lake. One good joint

outliving its own
century.

call it a mill in Rumford

and the trees go in as chips

and come out

as thunder,
black liquor burning itself
back into steam.

sodium sulfur
sodium sulfur:

the plant eating its own
exhaust to stay alive.

a calendar unit dragged over
from a mill that closed in Jay,
wearing its dead sister’s bearings

like a hand-me-down coat.

Colby Knapp, fourth generation,
watching the roll cut down

the way his great-grandfather
watched it:

the knobs analog,
the readout digital,
the seam between them

visible
if you know to look.

call it 1832

and an engine called Howe Dye Works
forgets what

it dyed.

traded once for a favor,
painted fairground colors,
sold south, sat quiet for decades—

not even asked

to breathe.

bought by a man with a garage
bigger than most countries,
given a modern boiler because

the old kind of steam

doesn’t keep.

walking beam rocking
like a held breath

let go slow:
four owners and a hundred fifty years,
and it still remembers

the motion.

call it June 1985

and a man named Arakawa gets renamed
Cohen by a joke

that stuck.

he takes it on purpose:

a borrowed name
for a project about how nothing here

belongs to just one hand.

stamps arriving from Lagos,
Seoul, Kyiv—

nerve endings finding a body
they didn’t grow.

he only assembles,
never designs.

every ten days for forty years,
the machine that prints it
long out of production.

the brain seen through a microscope
looks exactly

like the network looks.

ceiling
mill
engine
cell-

none of it stayed
what it was built as.

the hull kept its plank-order
under someone’s floor.

the mill kept
another mill’s hands.

the engine kept a stranger’s motion
running on modern breath.

the name kept a mistranslation
and called it

a gift.

I only cover heads.

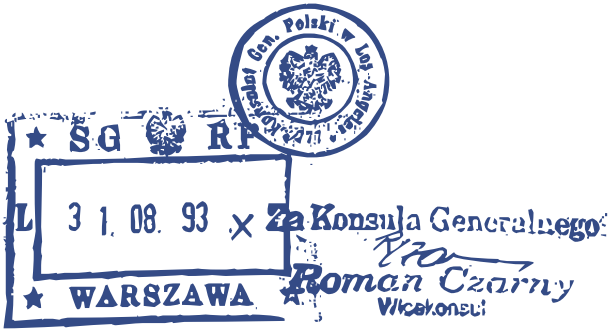
I never claim the hair
is mine.

Everything I print here
was already carried
by someone else first—

I just held the screen still

long enough

to let the pattern
come through.



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New ..... Write

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New ..... Write

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New Cuesticks. Floor
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DON'T SELL PENNIES SHORT

Remember! Children are important to your business. Twenty-five pennies will be spent more readily by them than five nickels.

This catalog lists a variety of inexpensive machines suitable for penny operation.

Every page in this catalogue has a message for you.

GAMES NOT LISTED IN THIS CATALOG

Due to technical difficulties a number of

REA
Flash.

THE GILDED SEAM CATALOG

Transactions for Promoting Infamous Knowledge, 1793–2026

Filed for the back pages of WANDERAKTE, care of The Spring-Wound Mammoth Pancake Coalition

I. METHOD, DECLARED UP FRONT

This catalog was assembled the way a broken bowl gets put back together: not by hiding the crack, but by pouring gold into it and calling the crack the good part.

Six pieces of Useful Knowledge, filed at Philadelphia between 1793 and 1982, are set down here beside one very homemade record

about milking snakes and performing your own lobotomy, and beside the Institute that claims to have noticed both. Nothing has been done to make them agree with each other. They are held together the way the Whole Earth Catalog held a windmill schematic next to a Buckminster Fuller excerpt next to a mail-order pair of hiking boots: on the theory that access — not coherence — is the organizing principle, and that a tool is a tool whether it measures the Atlantic or a man's own skull.

The seams are gilded, not sanded. Christian Metz is here because the two films that close this catalog already know they are apparatus, not window — they say so, out loud, in their own reviews. Gene Youngblood is here because one of those films

literally asks the eyeball to do a projector's job. Fluxus and Willem de Ridder are here as the instructions printed in italics under each entry — cheap, doable, mailed to no one in particular. The Anthology of American Folk Music is here as the all-capital headline over each citation, in the tradition of a compiler who believed a scholarly source and a mystery both deserve a good tabloid line before you get to the footnotes. And Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, Held at Philadelphia, for Promoting Useful Knowledge is here as the frame itself — the only one of these lineages that ever pretended to be sober.

And somewhere underneath all of it, unlisted because it was never a citation to begin with, a house band is here the way a

bassline is here on a record with the vocals turned up: Can't Hold Waffles, playing before the catalog had a name for what it was doing.

It didn't stay sober. Read on.

II. THE INSTITUTE'S OWN CARD, WITH ITS PAPER TRAIL ATTACHED

Before the six citations, one entry filed by the house itself, on the theory that a catalog which doesn't catalog its own compiler is hiding something.

The Panopticon Institute of Recursive Inquiry was not founded. It was noticed — somewhere between mile markers, on a highway crossing a map that only covers Guam. Its founding

doctrine, stated once and never revised: a thirty-dollar phone and the refusal to stop asking the next question already grant more access to primary sources, recorded lectures, and archival material than a hundred years of tuition ever bought anyone. The bottleneck was never access. It was believing you needed permission.

But the paper trail begins earlier, before anybody thought to call the trail an institution. If it begins anywhere, it begins with an eight-year-old sitting on his father's lap in a Honeywell Welfare Information Network cubicle in 1979 — the origin point the operation has since mythologized as its true founding, whether or not the paperwork agrees.

COMPUTER AND XEROX WORK SIDE BY SIDE; NEITHER AGREES TO BE THE OTHER

Access: Circa 1979, a Xeroxed collection of images and visual forays into data was made alongside experimentation with a Honeywell/WEIN computer system. The project was called:

VERSUCHSANORDNUNG I

The computer work and the Xerox work were not directly connected. The photocopies were not printouts from the computer. The Xerox machine was not functioning as an output device for the Honeywell system. They were two things happening beside one another.

This distinction is retained because historical accuracy is more interesting than retroactive technological mythology.

By 1980 the same Honeywell/WEIN system and a rented Xerox 914 had found a joint use anyway, whatever the machines privately thought of each other: blowing up Portsmouth Herald alligator photographs into 11×14 punk art brut posters, distributed unauthorized around town. Can't Hold Waffles was already the house band by then, and their earliest sessions fed directly into the same posters — the Xerox 914 ran in one room while the band practiced in the next. The operation drew enough attention that the publisher fled to Canada, and later returned as an old lobsterman, while his father spent the next

thirty-four years in hiding in a Vermont cabin. The band did not go anywhere. It kept playing — sometimes live, sometimes as multi-track field recordings, uplinked from wherever the satellite happened to be listening.

Score: Put two machines in the same room. Do not make one explain the other. Watch the history that accumulates between them.

That side-by-side arrangement is the first surviving joint in the long paper trail. From there:

Honeywell/WEIN + rented Xerox

↓

Doctor Zhai's Almanac (1984)

↓

Fowl Feathered Review / Fowlpox Press

↓

Fire Agate Press

↓

The Spring-Wound Mammoth Pancake Coalition

↓

WANDERAKTE

Running alongside every link in that chain, never itself a link: Can't Hold Waffles, the house band, uninterrupted since 1979.

The Almanac — formally, Doctor Zhai's Almanac, Being a Curious Vessel Containing Anything and Everything, which debuted in 1984 — was succeeded by Fowl

Feathered Review, published under the Fowlpox Press imprint. Fowlpox Press was in turn renamed Fire Agate Press, under which name it ran for the full duration of the COVID-19 pandemic, publishing three color-coded serials, all registered with Library and Archives Canada and archived via AnyFlip. The flagship was La nécessaire déconstruction de l'éphémère, a French/English quarterly (ISSN 2563-1713) that ran six issues, edited by Virgil Kay with Jack Ketch as poetry editor and Paris Pâté handling art and layout, printed under the imprint of Hen Island, Port Midjan, Atlantic Canada, and "distributed" from the amphibious vehicle Oruktor Amphibolos. Alongside it ran two unnumbered, ISSN-less one-offs: The Tidal Mouth Expositor (№ 537), edited by Theodorus Mávros with Paris Pâté again on layout

and artwork, and The Roundelay Warbler (№ 587), edited by Welton Schauung, who framed the issue as a cyclopaedia project derailed by his sister Anne.

Can't Hold Waffles, based out of Sheet Harbour, Nova Scotia — close enough to Port Midjan and Hen Island that the Oruktor Amphibolos could make the run without filing a new flight plan — supplied the continuous soundtrack for all of it. Paris Pâté's layouts were set to the band's piano studies; Jack Ketch's poetry edits were timed to the rhythms of a chicken-incident record; Welton Schauung's derailed cyclopaedia found its proper score in a set of burning-appliance pieces. None of this is claimed to be more than proximity. It is filed as proximity anyway.

Fowlpox Press — by then already once removed from itself — has since been succeeded in all operational, financial, and vehicular respects by The Spring-Wound Mammoth Pancake Coalition — not to be confused with the Spring-Wound Mammoth Waffle Coalition, its now-defunct sister company — under whose stewardship the magazine now publishes as WANDERAKTE.

The Waffle Coalition's demise is filed here without ceremony, because the band's own about page already filed it first, and more honestly: the same collapse of triumph into what the band calls "fried chicken afterglow" is, near enough, the auditory equivalent of the Waffle Coalition's quiet closure. The Pancake Coalition survived. The Waffle one did not. The band, characteristically, could not

hold the waffles. Their official record of the matter — such as it is — sits at cantholdwaffles.bandcamp.com, under two titles: Spare Change Chicken Incident and Studies for Piano and Burning Kitchen Appliances. The about text names its influences as running from Wittgenstein to Francis Bacon, its structures as both orderly and random, and its subject, depending on the track, as the relationship between oral hygiene and multimedia experiences. No registrar has been consulted regarding any of this either.

The first thirty-four issues of Fowl Feathered Review, along with the poetry collections and chapbooks filed in the back of this catalog, remain archived at:

https://fowlpoxpress.yolasite.com/

Hundreds of further issues followed under the same title. The archive is therefore less a vault than a weather system: material enters, drifts, doubles back, and occasionally becomes a magazine.

No registrar has been consulted regarding this sequence.

STRANGER AWARDED DEGREE NO ONE CAN REVOKE; FACULTY UNANIMOUS (THERE IS NO FACULTY)

Access: One diploma — unaccredited, uncountersigned, filed nowhere, valid everywhere a phone gets signal — a Doctor of Recursive Inquiry, earned by

the single act of not stopping at the first answer. Underneath it, a reading list that turns out to be this catalog's own ancestor: Internet Archive, Project Gutenberg, HathiTrust, MIT OpenCourseWare, arXiv, the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy — the Whole Earth Catalog's "access to tools" run forward forty years and pointed at libraries instead of windmills.

The Institute makes no promise that any of it is correct. It makes the more useful promise that you can check.

Score: Fold the diploma into your wallet. Show it to no one. Before tonight's impulse passes, look up one true thing you didn't know this morning. That

is the entire graduation ceremony.

[seam — an institute that grades no one still needs something to grade. Six citations follow, filed the way it would file them.]

III. THE CATALOG, SIX CARDS

CAPTAIN RECORDS TEMPERATURE OF MOM'S INDIFFERENCE, ATLANTIC DECLINES TO COMMENT

Thomas Truxtun, "A Thermometrical Journal of the Temperature of the Atmosphere and Sea, on a Voyage to and from Oporto, with Explanatory Observations Thereon," Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, Held at

Philadelphia, for Promoting Useful Knowledge 3 (1793): 194–198, excerpt.

Access: A naval commodore takes his own temperature, and the ocean's, every few hours for the length of a crossing, in the belief that if the number is written down enough times, some pattern underneath the weather will finally answer him back. It never quite does. Recommended for anyone who has ever kept a symptom log and privately called it science, because it is one, and because the not-answering is data too.

Score: Take your own temperature every hour for one day. Chart it on anything. Mail the chart to no one. That is the whole piece.

[seam — the sea gives no answer, so the catalog turns to the ants, who at least look like they're getting something done.]

MYRMECOLOGISTS CONFIRM: ANTS ALSO JUST TRYING TO EAT

W. M. Wheeler and L. W. Bailey, "The Feeding Habits of Pseudomyrmine and Other Ants (Pseudomyrmicinæ)," Journal of the New York Entomological Society 28 (1920): 235–237, excerpt.

Access: Two entomologists spend years cataloging which ant feeds which ant, and why, and with what — a whole unglamorous civil service of sugar and mandible running under the bark while nobody watches. There is a bureaucracy smaller than the

Institute's, and it has been filing paperwork since before anyone alive was born.

Score: Watch an anthill for ten minutes. Write down every transaction you can actually see. You will not see most of them. Keep the notebook open anyway.

[seam — if an anthill can run a foreign service, it turns out, so can Philadelphia.]

OLD MAN CHARMS FRANCE INTO FUNDING SOMEONE ELSE'S REVOLUTION

Jonathan R. Dull, "Franklin the Diplomat: the French Mission," Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, n.s., 72, pt. 1 (1982).

Access: Franklin's diplomacy, filed here not as statesmanship but as logistics — a redistribution operation moving French money and French ships across an ocean toward a fire he hadn't lit but was glad to feed. This is RP-01 with a wig on: nothing here was made free either. Somebody's treasury got converted into somebody else's cause.

Score: Ask for something you actually need by first, honestly, admiring what the other person is proud of. Do not lie. It works anyway, and that's the uncomfortable part.

[seam — diplomacy is one organism attaching itself politely to a much larger one. So, it develops, is the next entry.]

TINY CRUSTACEAN FOUND LIVING RENT-FREE INSIDE STINGING FLOWER; NEIGHBORS UNBOTHERED

Arthur G. Humes, "A Review of the Copepoda Associated with Sea Anemones and Anemone-like Forms," Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, n.s., 72, pt. 2 (1982).

Access: Nobody in this paper can fully decide whether the copepod is a guest, a parasite, or a piece of furniture the anemone has learned to live with. Filed here as the cleanest available diagram of the milking-snake problem one section down — the taking of something from a creature that was never built to give it, tolerated because nobody's quite sure yet what to call the arrangement.

Score: Move into the middle of someone else's finished sentence. Finish it differently. Leave before they notice you were ever there.

[seam — what looks like parasitism from the outside can look, from the inside, exactly like a conspiracy. See below.]

PEASANTS CONCLUDE HUNGER IS SOMEONE'S FAULT; TURN OUT TO BE MOSTLY RIGHT

Steven L. Kaplan, "The Famine Plot Persuasion in Eighteenth-Century France," Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, n.s., 72, pt. 3 (1982).

Access: Eighteenth-century French peasants become convinced

that hunger isn't scarcity but hoarding — that somewhere, warehouses are simply full and locked. The Institute's own doctrine, RP-05 On Waste, says a painting left in a closet is waste before it is ever theft, and this is the same accusation aimed a few centuries earlier and with much higher stakes. The crime was never the shortage. It was the stopping.

Score: Find the thing you are currently hoarding. It is smaller than you think it is. Get it into the nearest little free library before the impulse to keep it passes.

[seam — to measure hunger you need instruments, and the eighteenth century didn't trust its own eyes any more than the century before it did.]

MONKS BUILD DEVICE TO MEASURE THE UNMEASURABLE, DECLARE IT GOOD ENOUGH

Nan L. Hahn, "Medieval Mensuration: Quadran Vetus and Geometrie Due Sunt Partes Principales," Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, n.s., 72, pt. 8 (1982).

Access: A folded brass instrument, and a treatise insisting geometry has exactly two principal parts, both offered as ways to pin an actual number onto a sky that will not sit still for measuring. This closes the loop back to Truxtun's thermometer at the top of the catalog: six different centuries, six different instruments, one unbroken refusal to leave the world unmeasured.

Score: Build an instrument out of paper to measure something that cannot be measured. Trust the reading it gives you anyway.

[seam — six instruments, six centuries, one refusal to leave anything unmeasured — which is also, near enough, what a pop song is. Or a house band that has been running the numbers since 1979 without once being asked to.]

IV. THE FRUITING BODY: TWO SONGS BECOME TWO FILMS

If Can't Hold Waffles is the permanent house band, LET US PRAISE INFAMOUS CRITTERS, Laughing Bear's latest, is the one credited soloist the house band let take the stage — recorded under conditions the

Institute considers no less rigorous than Truxtun's: a Mitsubishi Mirage and a craft room, one Saturday, two second-hand keyboards running on Dollar Tree double-A batteries, with Module 9 the Bangor Bot supplying every spoken-word passage and sound effect — the closest thing to an oracle a redistribution economy can currently afford.

Two tracks off it, "Snakes" and "Lobotomy," didn't stay tracks. They grew companion films, and the films are where Metz and Youngblood actually earn their place in this catalog instead of just being name-dropped.

THE SERPENT'S UDDER

The film for "Snakes" already filed its own review before this catalog existed, and that review does the Institute's work for it: it names Metz outright, invokes the imaginary signifier, and calls the milking of a snake "theoretical" rather than violent.

It is Copepoda-card logic put to film — extraction from a creature never built to give up what's being taken, performed as scholarship because scholarship is also a kind of milking. The vial fills. The vial is always the point.

NO BRAINER

The film for "Lobotomy" is where Youngblood's Expanded Cinema stops being a citation and becomes an instruction. Youngblood's whole argument was that the cinema needed to expand past the frame and into the viewer's own nervous system.

NO BRAINER doesn't wait for a second projector or a pair of anaglyph glasses to do that. It asks the eyeball to do the technological labor itself: cross your eyes for ten minutes and a second film — koi fish, a deserted DMV, coffee going black — appears inside the first one, in color, exactly where the black-and-white had insisted nothing else was hiding.

That is expanded cinema at its cheapest and most literal: the apparatus is your own optic nerve, and it was free the whole time, like everything else in this catalog claims to be.

Both films shipped the way the Institute ships everything — saturated, not reached for: Archive.org and YouTube simultaneously, per RP-02, because no single platform gets trusted to still be standing in five years.

Waffle Meditations, the Institute's earlier fruiting body, went further still — Vimeo, Internet Archive, Odysee, and YouTube at once, on the same law: not because any one channel needed the traffic, but because none of them can be trusted to still exist, still host it, or still permit it in five years.

And somewhere in the middle of the album's own liner notes, one line sits where it has no earned right to sit, next to a bear and a karaoke machine:
"The worth of a civilization is the worth of the man at its center."

— Theodore Roosevelt, Bangor, Maine, August 27, 1902

It arrived, with the rest of the liner notes, twice — verbatim, unannounced. Filed here as one entry, not two, but the doubling itself stays on the record rather than getting quietly corrected, because RP-02 already made the argument first: redundancy isn't an error in this economy, it's the load-bearing structure.

A thing said twice, unprompted, in an archive built on saturation, is not a mistake. It's the mycorrhizal network doing what it does.

BEAR SINGS OWN NAME INTO EXISTENCE TWICE; PRINTER TAKES CREDIT.

File under: the same law as the six citations above. An instrument gets built, aimed at something that won't hold still, and the reading gets trusted anyway.

[seam — the films have now returned to the archive, but the archive has been waiting in the wings since the Xerox learned how to make a second copy.]

V. THE BACK CATALOG: THE PAPER TRAIL IN ITS NATURAL HABITAT

The lineage does not end when the film is uploaded. It simply changes format.

What began with a Honeywell/WEIN computer system and a rented Xerox machine circa 1979 passed through Doctor Zhai's Almanac, then through Fowl Feathered Review under the Fowlpox Press imprint, then through Fire Agate Press and its pandemic-run serials, and eventually into the operational, financial, and vehicular custody of The Spring-Wound Mammoth Pancake Coalition.

The Coalition is not to be confused with the Spring-Wound Mammoth Waffle Coalition, its now-defunct sister company. The difference is mostly edible,

though the paperwork insists otherwise, and the house band never let anyone forget it.

Under the Coalition's stewardship, the magazine publishes as WANDERAKTE. The first thirty-four issues of Fowl Feathered Review, together with the poetry collections and chapbooks below, remain archived at:

https://fowlpoxpress.yolasite.com/

Hundreds of further issues followed under the same title. The archive is not merely where the past has been stored. It is where the past keeps making copies of itself.

FIFTY-EIGHT BOOKS REPORT FOR DUTY; NONE CLAIMS TO BE THE MAIN EVENT

The following chapbooks and collections were published under the Fowlpox Press / Fowl Feathered Review era:

1. [Theoretical] Chaos – A.J. Huffman

2. A Mermaid Crashing into Dawn – Linda M. Crate

3. A Rag-Torn World – Dawnell Harrison

4. A Sleep/less Night: A-Z Poems – Kristopher D. Taylor

5. Aging Within These Syllables – Felino A. Soriano

6. All Right Already – Bruce McRae

7. Between These Rhythms: Bone & Ash – Felino A. Soriano

8. Burning Los Angeles – Robin Wyatt Dunn

9. Bye, Donna Summer! – haiku by Ali Znaidi

10. Candid – Gregory Liffick

11. Chalk Lines – Brian Michael Barbeito

12. Chemotherapy for the Soul – Leilanie Stewart
13. Clockwise Cats – Alison Ross
14. Conversations with the Muse – Neil Ellman
15. Dancing with Hedgehogs – K.J. Hannah Greenberg
16. Desecrations – Howie Good
17. Double-Takes – Neil Ellman
18. Eco Echoes, First Selection – Duane Locke

19. Electronic Loss and Other Poems – Gary Beck

20. Espials – Felino A. Soriano

21. Experimental Ruminations – Ali Znaidi

22. Family Matters – Steve DeFrance

23. Fishing in the Knife Drawer – Mark J. Mitchell

24. Fluid & Crystallized – K.J. Hannah Greenberg

25. Forms, Migrating – Felino A. Soriano

26. Grimaldi – Christopher Mulrooney

27. Harbor of Grace – Jnana Hodson

28. How Much of – Heller Levinson

29. In the Parallel of Pursued Occurrences – Felino A. Soriano

30. Internet Yearnings and Other Poems – Gary Beck

31. Mindscaping – Changming Yuan

32. Miró's Poesie: Ekphrastic Poems – Alison Ross

33. Nation of Nate: A Dongpo Pork Mixtape of Melancholy & Madness – Nathaniel S. Rounds, ed. Alison Ross

34. Nature Poems – Danny P. Barbare

35. Of Isolated Limning – Felino A. Soriano

36. Of Thunder, Pearls and Birdsong – Steve Denehan

37. Ostrakon Epistles: Selected Works of Nathaniel S. Rounds – ed. Ilan Blaine

38. Pathos | Particular Invocation – Felino A. Soriano

39. Poetry: No Poetic License Needed! – Haniyeh Yaseri

40. rhythm:s – Felino A. Soriano

41. Somehow Poems – Gregory Liffick

42. Tale of Twin Cities – Michael K. Gause and Alex Stolis

43. Terrestrial Illuminations – Duane Locke

44. The Barber's Boy – Phil Boiarski

45. The Daisy Roots Under My Pillow – Holly Day

46. The Foreigner of Two Fabrics – Stanford Cheung

47. The Heart Broken Open – Ronald Pies

48. The Ignited Soul – Dawnell Harrison

49. The Love Death and Other Poems – Dawnell Harrison

50. The Maiden Sky: New and Selected Poems – Dawnell Harrison

51. The Moon and Her Ocean – Austin Davis

52. The Red Forest – Dmitry Blizniuk

53. Vocal Apparitions: New & Selected Poems 2012–2016 — Felino A. Soriano

54. Waving at Strangers — Ken W. Simpson

55. When the Moon Is New — Joan McNerney

56. whoosh — Heller Levinson

57. Word Mosaics — Karen Robiscoe

58. Wordscaping — Changming Yuan

The list is not an appendix to the lineage. It is what lineage looks like when it survives:

names, titles, editions, misspellings avoided where possible, and a few books that have outlived the people who thought they were merely making them.

More recent issues of WANDERAKTE are available free by email subscription, or in POD, eBook, or archived format, care of The Spring-Wound Mammoth Pancake Coalition.

Contact card, still waiting for a real address:

[new Coalition contact address — placeholder; replace with real address]

for details.

DOCTOR ZHAI'S REMAINING COPIES CONTINUE TO RESIST EXTANTNESS

There are no copies extant or otherwise of Doctor Zhai's remaining.

If you find a copy, drop us a line.

[seam — every archive is a failed attempt to keep the thing from disappearing, and every missing book proves the archive was right to worry. The band, characteristically, is not worried. It never had anything to lose that it hadn't already given away.]

VI. COLOPHON

Six instruments — thermometer, anthill, treasury, anemone, granary, quadrant — one diploma nobody can revoke, two songs about taking milk from a snake and a drill to your own skull, one Honeywell/WEIN system, one rented Xerox, one house band that never once stopped playing, fifty-eight titles, thirty-four surviving early issues, hundreds more that followed, and a Coalition that is not a waffle.

All filed under the same roof for one reason: none of them agreed to be measured, and all of them were measured anyway.

That gap between the refusal and the measurement is the gold. It

was never meant to be sanded flat.

Access: everywhere a phone gets signal.

Communicated to no Society. Read before no one in particular. This entry is filed the way the Institute files everything that isn't finished being given away — unnumbered, undated:

WV — Wiedervorlage, held open.

The file remains open. The satellite still records. The press still prints around it. The waffles, as ever, cannot be held.

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Track List

Click on a track to listen to it

Side A

▶	Chickens Crash Blender Party Laughing Bear	9:58

Side B

1	hêrÐ ðvêrhêårÐ Laughing Bear	5:21

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